Employment Strategy in the Tenth Plan will focus on employment growth and on the qualitative aspects of employment. In order to enable the poor to access the opportunities and to ensure consistency between the requirement and availability of skills, emphasis will also be placed on skill development.

Loan for Modernisation of National Highways

*251. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the new loan the country got from the Asian Development Bank to modernise National Highways System; and

(b) the Highways to be developed with that loan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B. C. KHANDURI): (a) A US $ 240 million loan has been approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 20.9.2001 to the Government of India for Western Transport Corridor Tumkur-Haveri NH-4 Project. The loan repayment period is 25 years including a grace period of 5 years.

(b) The proceeds of the loan will be utilised for rehabilitation and upgradation of the existing NH-4 between Tumkur (km 75.0) and Haveri (Km 340.0) excluding Sirra bypass (km. 116 to 122) in the State of Karnataka.

Introduction of German Passport Writing Machine

*252. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that German made Passport writing machines would be introduced in the Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad;

(b) in what manner the machine would prevent frauds;

(c) whether Government also propose to introduce such machines in passport offices in other parts of the country; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to utilize services of a large number of excess personnel?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Passport writing machines have been introduced in the Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad on 9th November 2001.

(b) Since the image of the applicant and signatures will be printed by these machines directly on passport booklets, forgeries due to photo substitution will be eliminated.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As there is a shortage of Group 'C staff in the Central Passport Organisation, no exces personnel would be available due to the introduction of passport writing machines. However, this measure would enable the passport offices to re-deploy staff to reduce pendencies, expedite issue of passports and improve the overall quality of service to the applicants.

Accidents on National Highways in U.P.

†*253. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of accidents that took place on the National Highways in Uttar Pradesh during the last three years;

(b) the number of people killedlnjured in such accidents in the State during the said period; and

(c) the steps taken to prevent road accidents on the National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.